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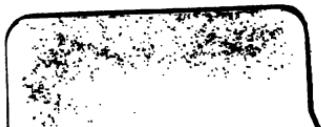


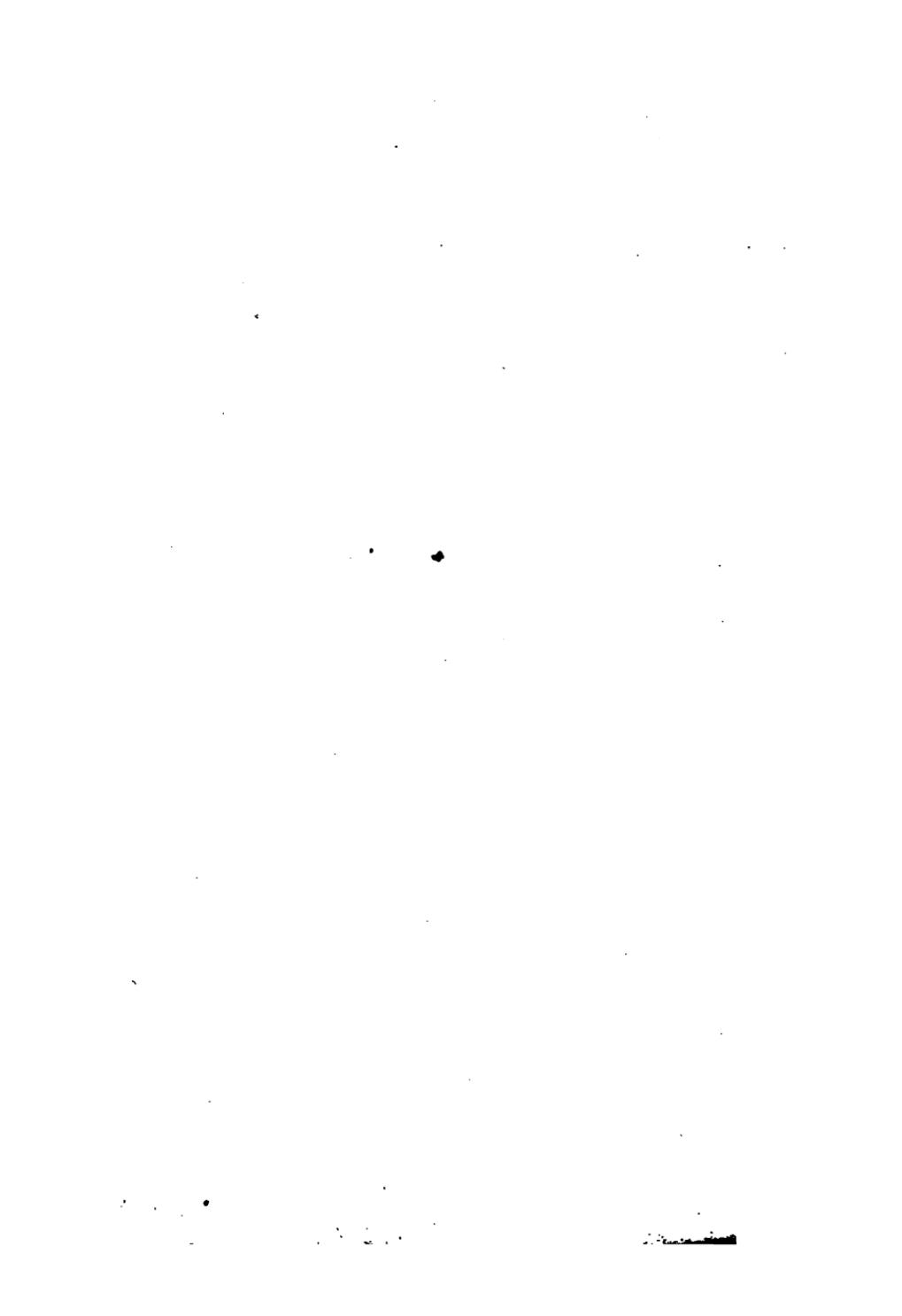
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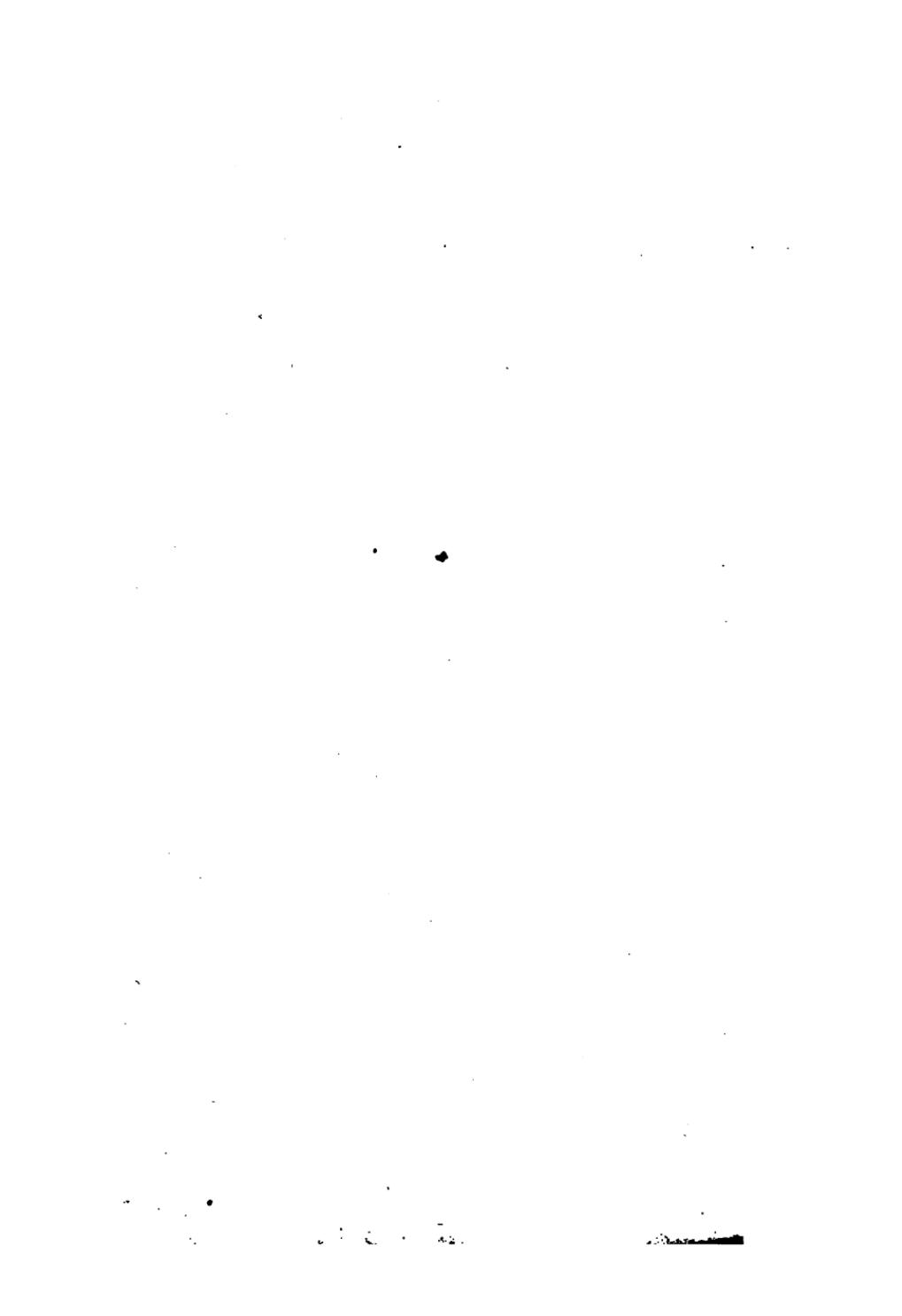
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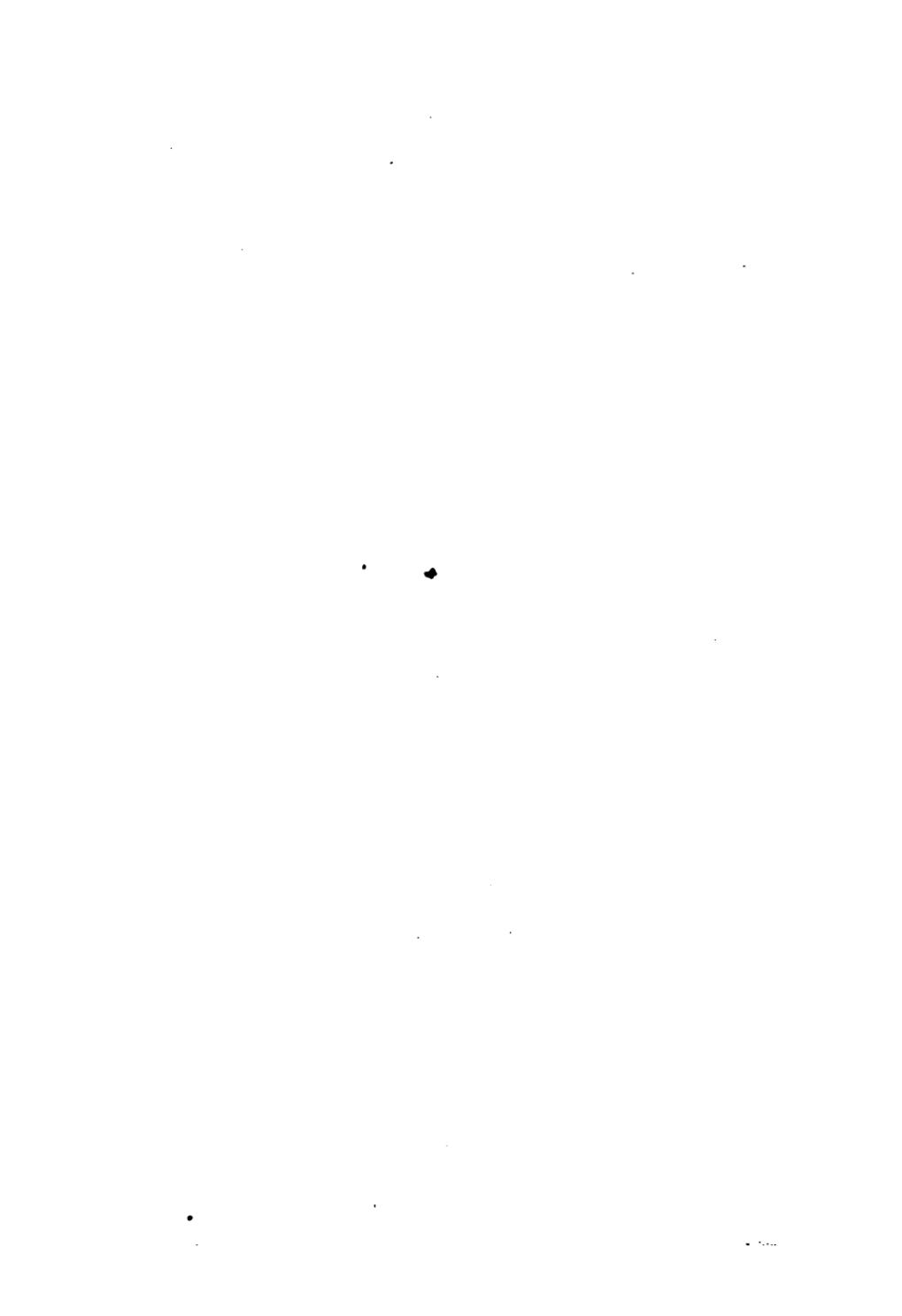
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THE  
OLD MAJOR OF THE 50TH;

OR,



THE RAILWAY VICTIM.

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BY CAPTAIN TREGOSSE.

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LONDON:  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co., STATIONERS' HALL COURT;  
T. W. MADDOX, LAUNCESTON.

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1847.



## THE OLD MAJOR OF THE 50TH.

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MAJOR F———, late of the 50th Infantry, on the return of his regiment from India, determined to sell his commission, to retire into the country, and to live on his small but independent fortune. He was sixty years of age, a period of life not beyond the enjoyment of rational amusement, but, as he then thought, too old for foreign service, and even less adapted to the gaiety and dissipation of a marching regiment in England. He had always lived respectably, but not ostentatiously or viciously, and his professional income had enabled him for many years to place in the bank a considerable part of his pay; so that, on his retirement from the service, he found himself master of a sum of money amounting to £6000.

When the necessary arrangements had been made at the Horse Guards, Major F—— left his regiment, and received from all the officers, (and even from the non-commissioned officers and privates,) those sincere marks of respect and friendship, which are so dear to an honorable mind. The Major could not leave his old friends, with whom he had shared so many dangers, and with whom the best part of his life had been spent, without feeling acutely, nor could he conceal from himself the fact, that he was about to be put upon the shelf. He was gradually creeping into the old man, and he now sought an honorable retirement,—some quiet, peaceful, cottage, far from the bustle and strife of active life, in which he might end his days in peace.

Many of his comrades had fallen in battle, others had died in a foreign land ; but it had pleased God to spare him, and he might reasonably expect to enjoy several years of health and happiness. It was true his sun was setting, but it would be gradual ; he should watch its decline, not with impatience, but with resignation ; in the con-

fident hope that he who gave him his being, and had so kindly preserved him, would cause it again to rise and shine in another and a better world. He looked over the names of the officers of the 50th, when he joined that regiment, and found most of them absent, not on duty, but in the grave ; and the few who remained were old veterans, who would soon follow his example.

Major F——— had seen some service, had been present at two hard-fought battles, and he now looked on the medals which recorded those engagements, with a feeling of pride and pleasure. He had no son to take charge of them, or to wear his sword ; but he knew that when he was silent in the grave, his daughter Julia would value them as highly as he did : he therefore placed them with his uniform in his military chest.

The Major had now become a peaceful citizen ; he had laid aside the dress and weapons of a soldier ; and it was necessary for him to acquire new tastes and new habits, more becoming his declining years, and better adapted for his retirement and new character. He could not stand at ease at Canterbury, where he daily saw his regi-

ment ; and as he had no local ties there, it required but little effort, and less preparation, to make the necessary arrangements for his departure. After debating the matter with Julia for some little time, they decided on going to P——, and within a week they were at the Royal Hotel, making enquiry for some convenient, genteel, cottage, either in or near to that place. They examined the newspapers without success, until one day as the Major and his daughter were walking in the Exeter Road, they saw a very pretty but curiously built cottage, standing apart from the other buildings, with a garden in front, and a large plot of land behind. It appeared to them both, that this was exactly the thing they were in search of, and they read on a board these words, "This house to be sold or let, enquire of Mr. Fickle, 2, King Street." They immediately proceeded to 2, King Street, when Mr. Fickle accompanied them to the premises, which he shewed to them with much politeness.

I was walking one Sunday evening, said Mr. Fickle, smoking a cigar, when I saw this piece of land to be sold. I determined

forthwith to buy it, cost what it might, and build a house to live in. The bargain was soon made, and every morning, for a month afterwards, I read the Times paper there, on a seat which I purposely erected. I formed my own plan, which as you see is not according to the ordinary rules of architecture. I expedited the building, and gave to every man double wages, who would work through the night. I longed to see it roofed in, floored, and papered; and when that was completed I made a discovery, which ought to have struck me before, that I had no money to pay the builders, and that if I lived there, my own practice as a surgeon must come to nothing. Acting therefore on the impulse of the moment, I took the painter's brush, and in five minutes completed the painting of the board, which no doubt attracted your notice. I am a man of few words, the rent is £30., the price if you buy £600. Instead of living in this house, I have bought a garden which adjoins my own in King Street, where I have built a laboratory, and am now busily pursuing chemical researches.

It is enough for the reader to know, that

within a month the Major was in Mr. Fickle's house, at the rent of £30. a year.

It is not necessary to describe the length or breadth of the rooms, but suffice it then to say, they were ample for Major F——'s establishment, which consisted of himself and daughter, and one maid-servant, the widow of a private of the 50th, who was killed in battle, fighting bravely by the side of the Major. An old pensioner, late a corporal of the 50th, called every morning to clean the boots and shoes, go errands, and look after the garden, for which he received four shillings and sixpence a week, and his Sunday's dinner.

It has been already said, the Major had £6000., which being placed in the 3½ per Cents. produced £210., a sum rather small; but being paid on the day it became due, and half-yearly, pleased him more than any other investment. I need scarcely add, that for a retired Major, the income was rather limited, but with good management it would be found sufficient.

The circle in which the Major moved was genteel and select; men only of the highest character were admitted to his table,

and those were intellectual and gentlemanly men, most of them old officers, who, like the Major, had travelled over a great part of the globe. Having spent much of their time with foreigners, they had preserved their English feelings, and lost some of their prejudices; they could love their country and her laws, without being blind to her faults. They could be Protestants even, without hating those who differed from them in religious matters, and their judgments, matured and ripened by travel and reflection, taught them to deal rigorously with their own failings, and to shew some degree of forbearance to the foibles and weaknesses of others. These were the associates of the Major, and the sons and daughters of those men, formed the circle in which Julia was to move.

Julia was in her eighteenth year, and might fairly be considered as a new edition of the Major, handsomely bound. The full blue eye, the lofty forehead, the aquiline nose, were the same in both, making allowance for those changes which time causes in forty-two years. The Major had been her companion, friend, and adviser; had

taught her the modern languages ; had studied her character, as it gradually unfolded itself ; had encouraged her in acts of charity and kindness, not only to the poor, near whom her lot might be cast, but to animals ; indeed to everything the Almighty had been pleased to call into existence. He also taught her to look with kindness and forbearance on a poor erring sister or brother, and not to frown and scare the poor creatures away ; but to remember that we too were frail and weak in the hour of temptation and trial. Endeavour, he would say, to win them back to the right way, by a good example ; kindness and mercy are better suited to us, than scorn and contempt, and as to punishment leave that to their Maker. He encouraged her to observe and to think, and in some degree to preserve an independence of thought, not always to follow in the beaten track, and to pride herself that her opinions were the same as those of her grandmother ; but within certain limits, to seek after the truth by the light of reason, and those powers with which she was endowed. But if he desired her thus to exercise her reasoning

faculties, it was not to form new dogmas, or to act in opposition to established opinions or customs. Above all, he prohibited speculative opinions in matters of religion, or searching to unveil those mysteries, which infinite wisdom had been pleased to shroud in darkness ; or to treat with levity, any great truth, which time had hallowed, and general consent had acknowledged. Religion, my dear Julia, he would say, is not so much a matter of opinion, or of creed, as of practice. Men think differently on the same texts of scripture, and pray for light to guide them into a right interpretation, which is withheld. If then infinite wisdom refuse to grant a favorable answer to their prayers, why should you and I set up a standard, and proclaim it perfect and unerring.

The mind of Julia thus formed became the counterpart of her father's, it was difficult to say which loved the other more ardently ; and the Major warmed as he saw his daughter grow into the woman, representing not only his own features, but the very impressions and thoughts of his mind.

My dear Julia, said the Major, the first

thing we have to do, is to furnish our little cottage ; and for that purpose, I will place in your hands to-morrow morning £200., exercise your own taste and judgment. My wish is to see the furniture genteel, but not gaudy,—good paintings are out of our reach,—mere daubs are contemptible. I should like a few engravings by the best masters, and the *tout ensemble* to be in keeping with my position in society.

Having completed the in-door department, let us make arrangements for the garden. I propose the ground in front of our cottage, to be your exclusive jurisdiction, and the kitchen and fruit garden to be the district for the corporal and myself; and if we do not supply you with good asparagus and gooseberries, try us by court martial, and let us be dismissed the service.

Agreed, Papa ; and I will name our cottage “the Retreat,” if agreeable to you. No, Julia ; the Major never retreated yet, and he would not like to see that name over his cottage in his old age.

True, said Julia, the corporal told me a few days since, when I took him a glass of strong ale in the garden, “the Major in

the field of battle, my lady, was always cheering and leading on his men, who loved him to distraction ; and as Sergeant Major O'Donnell used to say, the Major became cool as the enemies' fire grew hot." Did he ? said the Major, then tell the corporal to dine to day in the kitchen, on the roast leg of mutton, and I'll warrant him he will not forget it, for he has shewn to you already he has a good memory.

You take a great interest in adorning our cottage and grounds, Sir ? I do, my child, it is a lovely spot. And here the old soldier winds up ; he hears no more the drum and the fife ; he sees no more the colors of the 50th fluttering in the breeze ; instead of having a thousand men to do his bidding, he commands only the corporal ; instead of the parade ground, and the battle field, he has the kitchen garden : and here with his only daughter, whom he loves better than himself, he hopes to end his days in peace. From the cottage to the last resting-place, is but a step, and then the old soldier will soon be forgotten.

Julia burst into tears. May that day be far distant, said she ; and I hope it is not

impiety to implore on my bended knee, that the warrant of death may include us both ; we would then lie in the same grave, and at the sound of the same trumpet, rise together to meet the great Incomprehensible and eternal Judge of the earth.

The Major was much affected. Not so, my love ; the old oak falls first to the ground ; it is the order of Providence. I buried my parents, you will probably do the same ; one only remains at present, but we will say no more about this, let us, while we live, love each other tenderly, affectionately, devotedly, as we do now, and not talk of parting.

The first year passed away delightfully. Julia and the Major were very busy furnishing the house, and arranging the garden, forming their little circle of acquaintance, and enjoying the lovely walks and scenery of the neighbourhood.

The Major was a subscriber to the library, where he had an opportunity of reading the daily papers, and had access to a fine selection of works, both ancient and modern. Here he invariably walked before dinner, and found most unexpectedly Captain

Daring, of the Navy, with whom he had sailed from Madras to the Cape of Good Hope many years ago. Their old acquaintance revived, not from their tastes or habits being similar, but because they had been shipmates, and now by chance were thrown in each other's path.

One morning the Captain was more than usually attentive to the Times, when the Major arrived at the library,—“I have been reading,” he said, “the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s speech to the House of Commons, in which he proposes at once to reduce the £3. 10s. per cents. to £3. 5., and in ten years to make them £3. per cents. This reduction of interest, Major, is a most serious thing for many persons, more particularly for officers, who invest the greater part of their little fortunes in the Funds. I have £2,000. in this stock, and I am resolved to sell out and invest that sum in the railways. I know but little of this species of investment, but I suppose I can learn as well as others.”

Major F——— was a much greater sufferer by the announced reduction, for all his £6,000. was in it, and his interest, the

sole fund on which he lived, would be at once reduced from £210. to £195. a year. However, he said not one word about it to Captain Daring, and was resolved to sit by, and see what steps he would take, and then decide whether or not he should follow his example. It is not absolutely necessary for me to sell out the whole of my funded property, thought he; for at the worst, I might sink £1000., in an annuity, and the increase from that quarter would make up the deficiency in the other.

Within a month the Captain informed him of the result of his speculation, and shewed him, by a most satisfactory statement, and by a reference to the Daily Railway List of Prices, that he could, simply by ordering his broker at once to sell, realize a profit of £200. over and above his £2000., the actual money he had embarked. If I sell, he said, and realize this money, I will put every farthing of the £2000. and £200. in the new line of railway, which is not yet before the public, and in which I am offered shares to any amount, with a promise of being one of the Provisional Committee, and perhaps ultimately a Director, with a good salary.

Major F—— was much nettled about the reduction of the government interest ; he had never interfered in matters of business ; had confined himself to his profession ; and rather looked down upon money transactions as being plebeian, and below the consideration of an officer in her Majesty's forces. But circumstances make men change their opinions very rapidly, and none more so, than the sudden reduction of a man's income. Besides, he said, it will not end here, for in ten years my income is to be curtailed £15. more, and then all I shall have to support the respectability, I may say the dignity, of my rank as a Major in the army, will be but £180. I have a great objection to sink £1000. in an annuity on my own life, it looks selfish ; it leaves my daughter, who I trust will survive me, but £5000., and the pleasure of receiving my annuity, will be more than balanced by a feeling of injustice towards my child. The more he thought of the matter, the more convinced was his judgment, that if Captain Daring could procure him an interest in the new company about to be placed before the public, it was his interest,

and his duty, not to allow so favorable an opportunity to escape him.

The next morning, rather earlier than usual, he walked to the library, when he had an interview with Captain Daring, who, much flushed, was busily engaged reading the Railway List. "Look over this, my dear Major," said he, handing him a letter from the London broker, who had sold his shares. "What do you think of this style of thing? a profit of £249. on £2,000. in six weeks; promotion was not so rapid in my time." There was no mistake about it, the money was paid; there was no trouble, for he had merely to put his name to the transfer, which he did in the presence of the Major.

If the Captain had held his shares six weeks longer, he would have realized £400. more; for the first rise in the price was caused by a rumour that this company was about to place on the shelf their chairman, a highly respectable banker of the old school, who declared a dividend upon the actual profits of the line, and to give his place to a first-rate chairman of the new school; and the second rise, was on the appointment

being made. The shareholders were not disappointed, for within a month the new chairman doubled their dividend, and issued a host of new shares, to purchase railways near to their line, which were to be had for a trifle, and which by his magic wand immediately paid dividends, and became favorites in the market. If the Major had not already decided; if he had still a doubt; this letter would most probably have removed it. He therefore spoke confidentially to the Captain, who offered his services most kindly to him, and declared, on his word of honour as an officer, that if the company would not allow the Major to have shares to the amount of £1,000. he would withdraw from it altogether. If we succeed Major, we will triumph together; but if the speculation should fail, we shall be in the same boat.

The next day, the Captain assured the Major of the success of his application, and of the ready and handsome manner the solicitor had acceded to it. Nay more, said he, your name stands on the list of the Provisional Committee, I saw them write it immediately after my own; but I would

not allow it, and as a personal favor to myself, Major F———, late of the 50th, stands above Captain Daring, R. N.

The Major thanked the Captain for his politeness, but requested to stand after the Captain ; to this the Captain objected : and after mutual compliments had passed between them, the names were to remain as at first arranged. Within a week, the prospectus was issued, and the first persons named on the Provisional Committee, were six London merchants, men described by the solicitor as rolling in wealth, who sought through this company a profitable investment of capital. After them followed Major F———, late of the 50th regiment ; Captain Daring, R. N.; Thomas Fickle, Esq. And these three gentlemen were said to constitute a local board, who would sit every Tuesday and Friday, for the despatch of business.

The Major blushed when he read the prospectus, for it was the first time his name had appeared in print in any mercantile speculation, and he did not like to see it coupled with Thomas Fickle, Esq. However, he said, the world is changing in its

habits and customs, and I find by the papers those things are taking place every day. He never allowed any prospectus to appear in his cottage, nor did Julia know one word about the reduction of the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cents., or the change of investment. The engineers and their assistants were now in full activity ; carriages were seen going in all directions ; the London attorneys, and their local agents, were in the field from morning to night, giving notices, and getting up facts. Parties were placed at the turnpike gates, to enable them to make a good return of traffic, and probable receipts ; and no expense was to be spared, and no time could be lost. Rooms were taken, and in large letters the name of the railway company was written on the outer walls. Applications for shares were innumerable, not one half could be granted, and the work went on swimmingly. At last a cloud passed over the sun, and a dark shadow fell on the railway world. The Times every morning sounded the tocsin of alarm. Their readers put themselves some serious questions, as to their liabilities in railway shares. Bubbles were bursting in all direc-

tions, and provisional committee men and directors, were beginning to pass sleepless nights. Men who had eagerly applied for an allotment of shares, as if their future welfare depended on their success, now refused to pay their deposits ; and to every one who thought or reflected for a moment, the game was up, and ruin, certain ruin, must overwhelm thousands of families.

The company in which Major F——— had embarked was among the first to feel the crash. There ceased to be applications for any new shares, and the allottees, almost to a man, refused to pay a shilling deposit.

The Major saw at once they could never make the railway, and determined to the utmost of his power to arrange their affairs, so that the loss, falling equally on many, might not be ruinous ; and that all their debts and liabilities might be most honorably discharged. He called the local board together, and they agreed with him in thinking that the best plan was to wind up, and to do everything fairly and honorably ; and to Major F——— was committed the painful but necessary part of making the arrangement with the London Directors.

The Major felt it was his duty to act promptly ; he therefore accepted the office, and that evening wrote to the London Solicitors, and to the London Directors, and also to a confidential friend, to make enquiry into the respectability of the parties with whom his name had been connected, and with whom he was now to act in winding up this most unfortunate undertaking.

The Major ordered all letters addressed to him to be brought to the committee rooms, and on the third day after he wrote to the parties in London, he received two answers. The first he opened was from the Solicitors, who condoled with him on the failure of their project ; at the same time assuring him it would be the fate of all similar undertakings, which were not backed up by some old established railways ; and agreeing with him as to the propriety of immediately ascertaining the amount of all claims against the committee, and forthwith discharging them. The second he opened was from his friend in London, and in these words :—

DEAR F——,

I am shocked at finding your honored name mixed up with a set of swindlers. I was occupied the whole of yesterday in tracing, with a sergeant of police, the residence of the six London directors. I found after much trouble, that the first two on the list were writing clerks with Messrs. Gribble and Shy, the solicitors to the railway. The third was a publican, living at Whitechapel, at the sign of the Cat and Gridiron. The fourth was a porter at Gray's Inn, and the fifth and sixth were poor needy clients of the solicitors. I am sure the whole of them could not raise £5. I find also that Messrs. Gribble and Shy are well known in the profession as two dirty pettifogging fellows. It is most painful to write you these particulars, but I wish to tell you the truth, that you may see the exact position in which you stand. If I can be of any other service do not hesitate to apply to me.

Yours, DEAR F——,

John Fitzhardinge.

To Major F——.

Before reading those letters, Major F——, Captain Daring, and Mr. Fickle, thought they should have to contribute something out of their deposits towards the general expenses ; it might be perhaps £100. each ; but the letter produced fired them all with indignation and alarm. Captain Daring stamped, he swore, his rage grew ungovernable, he lost all self control. Mr. Fickle, at first assumed the attitude and appearance of a madman ; the news appeared to have stunned him, and deprived him of reason ; but after a little he recovered himself, as we do from the effects of a heavy blow or fall. Major F—— sat perfectly upright, calm and dignified, apparently suffering less than the others, but enduring such an intensity of horror, he could with difficulty support himself. At a glance he saw his position ; he knew he should alone have to stand the shock of this great failure ; he should be called on to pay the vast amount of bills, which must have been lately accumulating with such fearful rapidity ; upon his head would be heaped the disgrace and obloquy, which ought to attach to the really guilty parties,

and that he must sooner or later fall a victim, to a vile and cruel conspiracy, which he feared would rob him of fame, fortune, and perhaps of his life. He grew pale, and his lips trembled with agony. If he had stood alone, he could have borne it, but what would become of Julia, the happy, lovely, affectionate girl, who now waited his return.

The other members of the local board left, and the Major remained. Must I confess it, that man who had faced danger at the cannon's mouth; whose voice had cheered his men on to the deadly breach; who was distinguished in his regiment for his calm bearing in the midst of danger and of death, that man wept as a child. For at least an hour he continued in a state of frenzy, bordering on despair; at last he thought a ray of sunshine did appear, though it might be only to deceive him. The bankers in London might still have in their possession the money which had been paid as deposits. He made a great effort to rally his strength; he wrote to the London bank to know the state of the accounts, and to give notice not to pay any further

sum of money. He could not have an answer for three days, during which time he should be tortured by suspense; but still he resolved to bear it, and, if possible, with a smile on his countenance. Julia should know nothing till this letter arrived; the answer would be a verdict almost of life or death; if against him, he must inform her of everything; if favorable, then she should ever remain ignorant of it. Having addressed the letter to the London bankers, Major F—— returned to his cottage, no longer to be the happy home in which he was to spend the remainder of his days in peace. His heart was bursting, and he almost fell to the ground, when he saw Julia running towards him, and with a laughing playful smile, presenting him with a nosegay. See here, Papa, I have just challenged the corporal, and I also include you, to produce from your garden a flower, as lovely, or as fragrant, as this rose? Nay, smell it; and now I shall put it in your buttonhole, to wear for the remainder of the day. Do you accept the challenge? No! then give me a kiss, and

promise to keep your garden in better order in future.

She led her father to the cottage, and the corporal saluted as the Major passed him. Miss Julia laughs at us, your honor, but by your leave, we will see what can be done in the back garden next spring. The Major forced a smile on his countenance, but it would not remain for an instant, sorrow was already in possession, and claimed the soil as its own. The day passed miserably, then came night, long sleepless night, with all its horrors. He had been guilty of no crime, yet his punishment would be horrible, it would be a living death, and include not only his own but his child's fate.

He then accused himself of precipitancy; he ought not to have left every thing to Captain Daring; he should have seen who were the London Directors; he should have had an interview with the solicitors himself; for what were his judgment and reason given, if not to be exercised? He had acted like a madman and a fool. Thus memory allied itself with the enemies of

the Major, to heap more sorrow on his devoted head, and to drive the arrow that was piercing him deeper into the wound. What could he now do ? Should he appear in society again, as if nothing had happened ? Should he face misfortune, and endeavour to gain a victory, when fate herself appeared armed against him ? Victory ! What victory ? To appear as the dupe of scoundrels, sharpers, villains ! He a Major of the 50th, to herd with such rascals ! There was no path open for him ; there was dishonor in every step he took ; disgrace and infamy, with loss of fortune, awaited him. He the proud Major F———, would be driven from his home with his daughter, shunned, despised, pennyless, the jest and scorn of the country. Thus the thoughts crowded round his mind till the light broke, and the sun with its rays gave a warmth and beauty to his room, but it gave no pleasure to him ; he would gladly shroud himself in darkness ; he hated the light, and the world and life itself. He appeared at breakfast the next morning, and he found on his table a letter from Captain Daring :—

DEAR F——,

We are the dupes of swindlers, there is no time to lose; before you read this, I shall be on the road to London, from thence I shall travel to America by the first Packet; should the villains follow me, I shall be prepared for them. I would shoot them like so many water rats. If you stay where you are a month longer, your ruin is certain.

Yours, faithfully,

T. Daring.

Major F—— frowned as he read this letter. What! am I to fly from my creditors! to be chased, and hunted, and advertised in the papers, as a run away bankrupt? God forbid! Take my property, reduce me to the ranks, sell all I have, but let me lie in the grave as an honest man. No, Captain Daring, Major F—— has been the dupe of villains, will soon be an outcast, a wanderer, asking perhaps a night's shelter for himself and daughter, but no ruffian, no conspiracy, no power on earth, can deprive him of his honor, which he values above his life, and with a look of unutterable con-

tempt and scorn, he tore the letter in pieces, and stamped it under his feet.

That and the following day he passed in the Local Board Room, seeing no one but Mr. Fickle, who looked in occasionally, sometimes in despair, at other times hoping better days; now thinking himself utterly ruined, then on the eve of some great chemical discovery, which would place him in a better position than ever. And a host of creditors, who hearing of the break up, were anxious to be in early to secure a part of the wreck.

In those few days bills were sent in to the amount of £6,300. The claim of the engineers, and their assistants alone, amounted to £3,700., and every hour brought some fresh demand. There was but one chance remaining, and anxiously he waited the arrival of the postman, to receive an answer from the London Bankers. It might have come on the third day, but by some untoward circumstance it did not. Another day of misery, on the borders of despair, but still occasionally a ray of hope to prevent him from being lost in it; the

fourth day brought the answer. It was in these words :—

SIR,

The sum of £5,000. was paid into our bank to the credit of your railway, and the full amount was drawn out on Monday last, by the solicitors on a cheque signed by two of the London Directors.

Your obedient servants,  
Fergusson & Co.

The letter fell from the Major's hand on the floor ; the die is cast, he said. I have stood for three days on a single plank, over a gulph which yawned for my destruction ; that is now broken, and I am lost, irretrievably lost. Despair seized him, and he sunk almost faint ; his bodily and mental sufferings overpowered him ; and in a state of torpor he remained with his head leaning on the desk for a considerable part of the morning, the victim of remorse and injustice, upon whom a sentence had been passed more terrible even than death itself. He saw no termination to his sufferings, but

in the grave, and what pangs, what torture, must he endure before he arrived there.

It was necessary for him to return to his home, to make Julia a partner in his misery. With a weak and tottering step, he arrived at his own gate ; the sun was shining on the cottage ; the garden smiled with flowers ; and he could hear Julia playing on the piano, and accompanying the music with her lovely voice. He was about to silence that music, to make that girl a beggar ; and he looked on himself as a fiend, about to blight and destroy all who were connected with him. When he entered the house he found a person, who had been waiting for him an hour, and would not leave until he had seen him. It was an unfortunate man, who had taken shares in the new railway, on reading the name of the Major as one of the provisional committee. With the look of a maniac, he demanded the money he had paid as a deposit on his shares, and overwhelmed him with the curses of his wife and children. With difficulty Major F—— got rid of him. It was necessary for him to retire to his

room, before he had power to speak to his daughter, so completely was his strength prostrated by his misfortune. At last he came into the room where his daughter still played and sung. You are ill, my dear Papa ; what is the matter ? Your eye is bloodshot, your lips tremble. Oh pray ! tell me what ails you ? I will send instantly for a physician. No, my love ! no physician, no medicine ; it is here, pressing his hand to his side, this poor heart is breaking. Pray tell me, my dear Papa, what can be the matter ? Julia, my child, my love, your father is a beggar ; the victim of swindlers ; an outcast in his old age ; a poor miserable. .... but here his sobs almost choked him, and he became silent and motionless. After a time, he sufficiently revived to narrate to Julia all his misfortunes, concealing nothing. The shock was so sudden and unexpected, Julia felt a stupor come over her frame ; her sight grew dim, and she fell senseless on the sofa. For a time she appeared lifeless, and Major F——, doatingly as he loved her, hoped she was so, that he alone might live to bear the load that hung over

his devoted head. After some time she recovered and fell on her father's neck, and kissed him ; begged him to be comforted, but he refused all consolation ; despair had settled upon his heart ; he yielded to his fate, he struggled against it no longer. He retired to his room, and then to his bed, from which he never afterwards rose. Julia and the corporal waited on him, read to him, talked to him, but he could not rally.

Daily the creditors increased ; they came to his house, and demanded their money ; the larger creditors issued writs against him, the smaller ones applied to the court of requests. The bailiffs entered his bedroom, to serve him with legal process. Upon his dressing table, upon his bed, upon his pillow, there lay those legal documents to frighten and appal him. He made no defence, and soon the bailiffs came and seized his furniture. They took the watch and ornaments of his daughter ; they laid hands on every thing ; their impudence knew no limit. One night three of them being in possession, they broke into his wine cellar, they made a carousal in the

kitchen ; in their drunkenness they sung the filthiest songs, and the house rung with their wild merriment. They determined to have a lark with the old Major ; they went to the library, where they took from the military chest his full regimentals ; with these they dressed the most drunken of the three ; they buckled on the Major's sword, they placed on his head the military cap, they pinned the two medals to his coat, and in this manner they determined to walk to the Major's room. One of them took a mould candle in each hand, and marched first ; then came the Major's representative, then followed the other bailiff, carrying a warming pan over his shoulder ; and in this parade they burst into the Major's room. The Major when he saw them uttered a piercing shriek, and at one bound sprung from the bed, seized the pistol, which he always kept in his room, and ran towards the ruffians, but they had hastily retreated and closed the door after them. Then bewildered and overwhelmed by his misfortunes ; frantic, stung to the quick, at being made the jest and scorn of those

wretches, and seeing no hope but in death, he became mad, and losing all self control, in an instant he turned the weapon upon himself, and died by his own hands.

The report of the pistol soon brought the corporal, who for some nights had been sleeping in the house. He rushed upstairs to go to the Major's bedroom, when he encountered the bailiff in his master's regiments. He seized him like a fury, and hurled him headlong down the stairs. Then going to his master's room, he found him bleeding, and all but dead, his head resting on Julia's lap. The sight horrified him, and, trembling all over, he fell on his knees, and with a voice, all but stifled by his sobs, prayed to the Almighty to forgive his dying master.

Julia, who had heard the report of firearms, had ran to her father dreading the worst. Poor girl, her efforts were unavailing, her lamentations and tears useless, for within an hour her father died in her arms. The shock was too great for her tender frame; her reason gave way, and within a week she was taken to the workhouse quite mad.

An inquest was held on the Major, when the jury returned a verdict, that he had shot himself in a fit of temporary derangement.

The Corporal begged the body of his master, which was granted to him ; he kept guard over him until nightfall ; then, wrapping him in the Major's own military cloak, he carried him to his own humble lodgings, laid him on his own bed, and afterwards buried him at his own expense.

Misfortune and slander had driven from the Major all his friends, and the only person who attended the funeral, was the old Corporal, who raised over his grave a stone, on which was carved these words :—

“ Sacred to the memory of the gallant, but unfortunate Major F——, late of the 50th Infantry, who died in the sixty-third year of his age.”

The Corporal desired the sculptor to place over this inscription, a soldier in full uniform, bearing in his hand a flag, with the 50th regiment on it, but to his mortification he found the task above the man's skill.

For many evenings afterwards might be seen the Corporal, leaning on this tombstone, looking sorrowfully on the grave, repeating these words, "gallant Major! kind Master!"

Julia continued in the workhouse for a fortnight, lost to every thing; her reason then gradually returned, but only to add to her misery by crowding on her memory the frightful events which had so recently taken place; the fearful death of her father, and her own utter destitution. A melancholy, sad to contemplate, prostrated her mind and body; nothing could interest or rouse her, indeed how could comfort reach one so miserable? She had lost her only parent by a death the most violent and heart-rending; every vestige of their furniture was sold; and she was an inmate of a place set apart for the most unfortunate and the lowest of her species. She saw no one except the ordinary attendant, and the poor old Corporal, who never failed once a day to carry her a few flowers, and to inquire after her health. He was the only being who felt the least interest in her

existence, and a case more hopeless cannot be conceived; but amidst this gloom a ray of light was about to shine, and for poor Julia Providence was about to raise up a friend. Mr. Langford Lockyer, the eminent engineer, who had amassed an immense fortune in railways, was engaged at P—— professionally. He made enquiry about this unfortunate speculation, by which Major F—— had been ruined. It was with difficulty he could learn anything about the Major, who was the chief sufferer. Many had forgotten him; others said, the old rogue had at last met the punishment he so richly merited; but the engineer, who had heard in London that Major F—— had been the dupe of others, was determined to ascertain not only the fate of the Major, but of his daughter.

After many days seeking information, where he thought himself certain in obtaining it, he was directed to an old servant of the Major's, no other person than the Corporal. With a heavy heart, the Corporal related, in his simple language, the noble bearing of his late master in the

field, his kindness in private life, his retirement from the army, his unfortunate connexion with the swindlers in the railway world, his degradation, ruin, and death. He burst into tears when he spoke of his master's daughter ; the beautiful, once merry hearted girl, who, forlorn and miserable, was now pining away in the solitude of a workhouse. Mr. Lockyer was a man of feeling ; he had been fortunate, but he looked not with a stern and cold eye on those who were in adversity. He requested his wife and daughter to go to the poor girl, to dry her tears, and if possible to remove the load of grief that weighed upon her heart. The Corporal, dressed in his best clothes, with the stick under his arm which the Major had given him, and which he valued above all price, led them to the workhouse. It was a fine handsome building, displaying considerable architectural skill ; it had a pleasant aspect, and commanded a rich and varied prospect. The sun was shining on it ; and on the outside were groups of poor old people, not indulged with a form on which they might rest their rheumatic

limbs, but leaning against the wall for support, and enjoying (if persons in their position can enjoy anything,) the rays of that glorious orb, which warms the poor as well as the rich, the evil as well as the good.

After ringing the bell, the little party were introduced to the matron, who took them at once to the room in which lived poor Julia F——. This little apartment, from which she had never moved, looked into a yard, in which poor idiots, amounting to seventeen, were kept during the day. Julia was so sunk in despondency, the appearance of the party, though perfectly unexpected, did not rouse her. You could see melancholy and despair upon every feature. After a few kind enquiries, which produced only a simple answer, the matron thought proper to read her a lecture. "I have told her," she said, "it is wicked and sinful to give way so. She must bestir and exert herself; she must call out her energies, and strive against this lowness of spirits, which unfit her for everything; she should look through the world, and see the thousands who are starving, while she is

surrounded by mercies. A thought occurred to me this morning, which I shall name to the governor of this well regulated house, and which I have no doubt he will approve. It is this, to give her employment; and as there is a vacancy in the paralytic ward, she will have the entire charge of three patients, who will be constantly requiring her services; this will keep up her attention, and divert her, while I shall request her to read to them every evening a tract, and who knows but that this may open her heart, as well as the paralytics whom she will nurse, and may be the means of doing her good, not only in this world, but in preparing her for that to which we are all hastening. By the by, I will fetch a bundle of those tracts at once 'tis a good thought."

Mrs. Lockyer thanked the matron for her kindness, but feeling most acutely for poor Julia, she added, I will take Miss F——— with me, and at once, if it be not trespassing on the rules of this establishment, and I hope to see her smile again. What say you, Miss F———, have you any objection to trust yourself with a stranger?

Julia looked in her face, at first almost with a vacant gaze, but seeing nothing but kindness there, her eye brightened, and, without hesitating a moment, she consented.

The Corporal shed tears of joy as he led them to the carriage, and opened the door. Mr. and Mrs. Lockyer and their daughter, did every thing to amuse her, but Julia's tender frame had received so severe a shock, she rallied but slowly.

An unexpected event however achieved wonders. Mr. Lockyer's only son returned from college, where he had distinguished himself by his acquirements, and full of sensibility and manly feeling. The lovely form of Julia, drooping under misfortune, her utter helplessness, at once captivated him, while the attention and interest he took in every thing that related to her, soon awakened in her mind the warmest friendship, which in a short time ripened into love. A feeling thus powerful brought again the fire to her eye, the color to her cheek, and she who was lately in despair now began to hope, aye even to smile, and think of happier days.

Within twelve months she was married, with the perfect consent and approbation of Mr. Lockyer, and poor Julia became the wife of the Rev. Charles Lockyer, of Middleham, Herefordshire. She has a fine boy, six months old, which the Corporal, who is in her employ as gardener, delights to carry about, and if we can believe the Corporal, the child already exactly resembles the old Major of the 50th.

No letter has been received from Captain Daring since he left England.

Thomas Fickle, Esq., has removed from P——— to Cheltenham, where he has an establishment for the cure of patients driven mad by railway speculation. His house is constantly full, and report says, he will make a fortune in a few years.











